

Checkup time

Yearly medical and dental checkups are the best way to make sure your child is healthy and developing well. Before the checkup, write down any questions or concerns you have, then take the list with you. For a free screening to check for developmental delays, call the Family Health Hotline at 1-800-322-2588 or your local school district.

Finish vaccine series to protect your child

When your child turns four, he will finish several vaccine series that he started when he was younger. These remaining vaccine doses will help him build the best protection against certain diseases, like pertussis (whooping cough). On or after your child's

4th birthday, he will need another dose of the following vaccines:

- Diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis (DTaP)
- Inactivated poliovirus vaccine (IPV)
- Measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR)
- Chickenpox (varicella)
- Flu (influenza), yearly

"Booster" doses of some vaccines are needed to maintain protection. Your child will be due for more boosters when he turns 11 years old.

How about YOUR immunizations?

Adults and older children often spread diseases to younger children and the elderly. Be sure to get immunized to protect others in your family and community from diseases that vaccines prevent. Encourage everyone who spends time with your child to make sure their immunizations are up-to-date.

- Are the staff and other kids at your child's



preschool or child care immunized?

- Have you had a Tdap shot to protect yourself from whooping cough?
- Do you get your flu vaccine every year?
- Are you immune to measles, mumps, rubella, and chickenpox? Have you had these diseases or do you have a record of getting these vaccines?

Check with your doctor, nurse, or clinic to find out which vaccines you need. Most pharmacies also offer immunizations for adults.

Help your child get ready for kindergarten

You may be thinking about what you can do to get your child ready for kindergarten. Many of the things you do every day are helping her get ready.

- Talk with her about things she is interested in.
- Read a story to your child and talk about how it could have a different ending.
- Look at family pictures and talk about them.
- Help your child learn how to solve problems that come up when she is playing with her friends.
- Help her learn how to write her name.

A cavity can make it hard to talk and focus, so good oral health is an important part of starting school. Help your child brush after breakfast and before bed with a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste. Your child will need your help brushing until she's about eight years old.

Help your child express feelings

Your four-year-old may have very strong feelings. This is normal, but it might worry or surprise you. He is learning to express **all** his feelings and needs your help.

- Help him use words to tell you what he feels, whether he is happy, sad, frustrated, angry, or afraid.
- Take the time to stop and listen to your child.
- Find books about feelings to read together.

Keeping Your Child Healthy and Safe

Fitness and your four-year-old

If your child enjoys being active now, she is more likely to be active all her life. Staying fit can help lower the risk for serious health problems like heart disease, diabetes, and stroke later in life. It can also help self-esteem. Be active as a family and set a great example for your child.

- Go for a walk or bike-ride after dinner.
- Turn on your favorite music and dance together.
- Limit "screen time" (TV, videos, tablets, and computers) to no more than two hours a day.

Eating together as a family is a good habit

Sit down to eat together as a family at least once a day. Turn off the TV and cellphones. Give everyone a chance to talk and share stories about their day. Listening and talking to grown-ups helps children learn new words which helps them read better.

When you eat at home, your family is more likely to eat healthy foods from all five food groups. Your child can help you plan meals and prepare food. He might be more willing to try a new food if he helped make it.

Children are curious about their bodies

If your child asks questions about his or her body, give simple, honest answers. Try not to make your child feel embarrassed. Teach the correct names of body parts.

It is normal for young children to look at and touch their genitals (private parts). They also may be curious about other children's genitals. Check on children while they are playing. If they are talking about or exploring each other's bodies, calmly help them find other things to do.

Teach your child where it is okay to take off clothing and touch his or her genitals. The bathroom and bedroom are such places. Also teach when it is okay for other people to touch his or her genitals. Examples are a doctor's exam or a parent helping to clean up after using the toilet.

Touching and exploring are normal, but parents may have questions or concerns about sexual abuse. Signs may include changes in mood and behavior and/or physical symptoms, like genital bruises, bleeding, or infections. If you see these physical symptoms, take your child to the doctor or hospital emergency room right away. Parents should also be concerned about a child who knows things about sex that only a grown-up should know, or who is sexually aggressive. If you have any concerns, call your doctor or nurse.

Safety in cars

Everyone who rides with you must use a car seat, booster seat, or seat belt that fits properly. Washington State law requires that children ride in a booster seat until they are 8 years old or at least 4 feet, 9 inches tall. Booster seats should be used with **both** a lap and shoulder belt, not just a lap belt.

As your child gets older, he is likely to ride with other parents or caregivers. Make sure they buckle him into his car seat or booster seat correctly.

Washington State law also requires that children younger than 13 must sit in the back seat. If your vehicle does not have a back seat, slide the front seat all the way back and, if possible, turn off the air bag.

Questions about air bags or lap and shoulder belts?

Call the Safety Restraint Coalition at

1-800-BUCK-L-UP (282-5587)

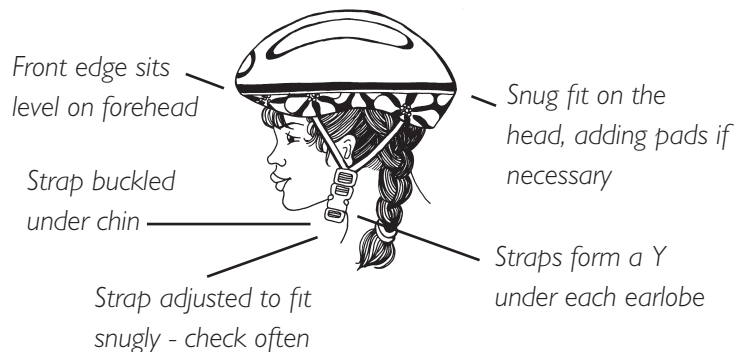
or visit www.800buckleup.org

Make sure your child uses a helmet

A helmet can protect your child from serious brain injury when using tricycles, bikes, skates, and scooters. Check to make sure it fits correctly. Make sure your child knows you expect her to use her helmet every time she rides. Set a good example by using yours. If your child skis or rides a horse, be sure she uses the right kind of helmet.

Take the helmet off before your child plays on playground equipment. A helmet can get caught in the equipment and cause serious injury.

Correct Helmet Use



Buy a helmet that meets Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) or Snell standards. Don't use second-hand helmets. They may not be safe. Contact the CPSC at **1-800-638-2772** or visit www.cpsc.gov/Safety-Education/Safety-Guides/Sports-Fitness-and-Recreation for information.

For the Health of All Our Children

Child Profile is a service of the Washington State Department of Health